

**July 17, 2007**

**WASHINGTON** - U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.), member of the House Homeland Security and Foreign Affairs Committees, today issued the following statement regarding the release of a National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on terrorist threats to the American homeland:

“This comprehensive intelligence assessment paints a sobering picture of the current and future threats posed by terrorists to the U.S. homeland.

“It is yet another reminder that ruthless killers like Osama bin Laden, members of his al-Qaeda terrorist network and other radical extremist groups continue to conspire and plot to carry out terrorist attacks on American soil.

“While the NIE highlights the successes of worldwide counterterrorism operations in degrading al-Qaeda's ability to attack America again, it also reports the depth of al-Qaeda's efforts to use places like Iraq and Pakistan as a recruiting ground and operational center, respectively, to carry out its jihad against the United States.

“The report shows that Iraq remains a central front in the Global War on Terror. Al-Qaeda has actively collaborated with Iraqi terrorist groups, like “al-Qaeda in Iraq,” which are responsible for thousands of deaths through bombings and assassinations. Such active cooperation has helped to further the operational capacity of al-Qaeda and allowed it to more easily adapt to the changing global security landscape.

“In the aftermath of September 11th, America stood united and vigilant against the terrorist threat. This report reminds us that nearly six years after that fateful day, we risk diminishing the importance of this memory and our commitment to fighting the Global War on Terror at our own peril.”

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